

Sent: Wednesday, March 9, 2022 2:35 PM
Subject: Last Nite's MOB Study on Revelation 15

"And they sang the song of Moses, the bond-servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, 'Great and marvelous are Your works, O Lord God, the Almighty!'" (Revelation 15:3)

Remember our studies in Revelation 14? Where John, in a vision, saw the 144,000 Jewish "missionaries" standing triumphantly with the Lamb on Mount Zion, at the end of the Tribulation, with the sound of loud thunder and the singing of a new song of praise and worship coming from heaven in the background! A "proleptic" scene of "things to come," with the Second Coming of Christ and the beginning of His Millennial reign on the earth!

But then, in a digression, John (in Revelation 14) took us back again to more of what will be happening during the tribulation period, beginning with an angel "flying in the mid-heaven" preaching the "eternal gospel," giving all the people remaining on the earth one last opportunity to be saved, because "the hour of judgment (with the return of Christ) was about to come"! This was followed by a second angel proclaiming that Babylon the great was fallen! Then a third angel announcing that "anyone who worships the beast (Antichrist) or his image, or receives the mark of the beast, will "drink of the wrath of God," and be tormented with fire and brimstone for all eternity!

That same third angel also challenged believers and followers of Christ who were remaining on the earth to "persevere" in their faith! Then a "voice from heaven" told John to write about how "blessed" were those who "die in the Lord" followed by an affirmation from "the Spirit" that those who die would be able to "rest from their labors" and that their "works would follow them"!

Then John looked again and saw (in another vision) "one like the Son of Man" sitting on a white cloud with a "golden crown on His head, and a sharp sickle in His hand," ready to reap an (over-ripe) harvest on the earth! Then another angel gathering clusters from the vine of the earth and "throwing them into the great wine press of the wrath of God," where they were trampled, "with blood coming out and rising to the horses' bridle"! A metaphorical expression (presumably) symbolizing the outpouring of God's final judgment of the earth that would come from the final seven bowls of judgment, culminating in the Battle of Armageddon!

And all that aptly set the stage for our lesson last night on Revelation 15, where John "saw another sign in heaven" which he could only describe as "great and marvelous"! Because he saw seven angels holding the final seven "plagues" which were about to "finish" God's wrath on the earth! And "those who had been victorious over the beast and his image and the number of his name, standing on something like a sea of glass mixed with fire...holding harps of God and singing songs of praise and worship to the Lord God, the Almighty"!

The word "finished" that John used here is same Greek word he had earlier used in his "gospel" (in John 19:30) when Jesus cried out on the cross, "It is finished"! There, the purpose of redemption for mankind was completed! Here the purpose for God's divine judgment is (or will be) fulfilled with the "final" seven plagues!

Those whom he saw standing on the sea of glass were the Tribulation "martyrs"! The "overcomers"! They overcame by not going along with the rest of the world in worshipping and following the "beast"! Instead of yielding to the blasphemous demands of the beast, they remained faithful to God unto death! Their victory lies in the fact that their persecution from Satan delivered them to heaven! Revelation 20:4 says, "...And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years!"

Revelation 15:3 says, "they sang the song of Moses...and the song of the Lamb...!" The similarities are well noted by MacArthur: "the song of Moses was sung at the Red Sea; the song of Lamb by the crystal sea; the song of Moses was a song of triumph over Egypt; the song of the Lamb over Babylon; the song of the Moses told how God brought them out; the song of the Lamb how He brings them in; the song of Moses was the first song in Scripture; the song of the Lamb the last; the song of Moses commemorated the execution of the foe, the expectation of the saints, and the exaltation of the Lord! The song of Moses deals similarly with God's faithfulness, His deliverance of His own, and His judgment of the ungodly!"

- "Great and marvelous are your works, O Lord, the Almighty" (drawing on Psalm 139:14)
- "Righteous and true are Your ways, King of the nations" (echoing the words of Daniel 4:37 and Deuteronomy 32:3-4)
- "Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy" (Check out Isaiah 6:1-3!)
- For all the nations will come and worship before You, for Your righteous acts have been revealed!"

And so, the two songs together describe the character of God which demands judgment for the wicked and close with a joyful anticipation of the millennial reign of Christ!

But there's more!

John, in a startling new vision, looks and sees "the temple of the tabernacle of testimony (the very inner sanctuary, in the "Holy of Holies," where God dwells) in heaven opened" and the seven angels, coming out of the temple after being given "seven bowls full of the wrath of God"! And the temple being "filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power; and no one able to enter it until the seven plagues of the seven angels were finished"!

And we're reminded of the earthly temple of the Old Testament, which was only a picture of the heavenly one, where God provided mercy and atonement for sin! Where His glory came down and filled the place with the shining "shekinah" glory of God! And how, formerly, no one except the priest, on the Day of Atonement, was allowed to enter into the Holy Place (i.e., until Christ died on the cross and "yielded His spirit"). Matthew 27:51 says, "And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from the top to the bottom and the earth shook and the rocks were split"! And, for the first time since the Fall, man had direct access to God through Christ! Hebrews 10:19-20 says, "Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh!"

But, interestingly, here (in Revelation 15:8) access is temporarily denied!

John Phillips, in his book on Revelation, writes: "Since Calvary, the way into the 'holiest' in heaven has been opened to all, because the blood of Christ has blazed a highway to the heart of God. But now, for a brief spell, that royal road is barred! God's wrath, once poured out upon His Son on man's behalf, is to be out-poured again! The world which crucified the Lamb, and which now has crowned its rebellion with the worship of the beast, is to be judged to the full! So bright glory burns within the temple, filling it with smoke and standing guard at the door. The way into the holiest is barred again for a while!"

And so, as MacArthur has noted, once the wrath of God was placed on Jesus Christ because of what He was doing for sinners! In the future, the wrath of God will be placed on sinners because of what they're doing to Christ!

But the amazing thing is that all through the devastating judgments that God will be pouring out on the world, He is, and will be, continuing to call sinners to salvation! God doesn't take pleasure in the death of the wicked and is not willing that any should perish! And so, the opportunity is still there for people to come to Christ and be saved by His grace, and from the wrath to come!

"Great and marvelous are Your works, O Lord God, the Almighty!"

Lowell